

Being called a Hero

by KoopasRoad

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Summary: Henry Townshend becomes South Ashfield's hero after saving the city from Walter Sullivan's torments. However, is he really what society thinks he is?

Being called a Hero

****Being called a hero****

Townshend.

The name echoed on every radio stations and every TV news channels. It was written all over South Ashfield's newspapers, just like a hero would be exposed after saving thousands of lives.

The remaining inhabitants of the apartment building praised and acknowledged him for his courage and heroism. The survivors even wished to meet him personally to express their gratitude.

The mysterious and quiet guy from Room 302 in South Ashfield Heights basically saved the whole city from Walter Sullivan's evil torments.

What struck people the most was that, supposedly, the guy survived Hell itself. He fought his way through Other worlds without any deep knowledge of combat and self-defense. He endured the rusty and iron smell lingering in the dense air, the blood stained and flesh walls. He endlessly fought the evil, pouring every inch of his energy into his battles against gruesome monsters and stalking ghosts. Ultimately, he slayed the Conjurer and exorcised Walter's evil spirit.

Henry Townshend was South Ashfield's hero.

His uncanny heroic image broadcasted by the media became a source of inspiration for many men and women. Some even entitled him Super

Henry. Trivial magazines displayed cheeky titles on their covers such as "Super Henry VS Sullivan" or "Townshend Slays the Evil!". And much like any other hero, a bunch of hormonal teenagers lusted over him. Henry had to dismiss numerous messages from women in their twenties asking him out for dates or coffees.

Some skeptical articles would dare suggest that Henry was simply insane and could not distinguish fantasy from reality, hence justifying his surreal talks about the room incident. These people believed that Walter Sullivan was a conspiracy induced by the government, and that Henry's exploits were fake.

In more serious papers, specialists would discuss Henry's mental health. Psychologists would assert that fragments of his memories may be distorted, due to traumatic experiences; he would be suffering from a post-traumatic stress disorder following the horrifying encounters. What had happened in these other dimensions may have been too much to handle, the brain being unable to process the amount of surreal images, hence categorizing him as insane.

Henry also received multiple requests to attend interviews and talk host shows, for most he declined politely. Only twice he accepted to show up, the reason being that he knew the hosts for not asking awkward and dumb questions. During the interviews, Henry remained distant, replying the obvious without going in too much details. He just did not want to talk about it in depth with the public, which was totally understandable.

The image the media created of Henry was just an illusion. It was artificial and purposely modified to fit the audience's interests; it was a by-product of the overly gossip society we live in. Henry was never left alone, always called and pressed to answer questions. The worst thing is, he knew that all of this attention would be over in about two weeks.

People believed they knew everything from what they heard or read. But little did they know what truly happened. For most of them, it was just another story generated by the media with more spice in it. From afar, all the public saw was some person saving the world from some abstract and mysterious evil force, without realizing the true agony the person has been through.

But I know exactly what happened, because I was there, trailing all along. I have seen disfigured and dismembered bodies covered in blood. I have felt the living flesh squirming from decaying walls with my own fingers. I have tasted the pain of a sharp knife cutting through the skin of my back. I have been possessed and tortured.

In the Other worlds, I have been suffering both physically and mentally, just like him. I have stared into his tormented and fearful eyes. I have held him in states of panic and helpless distress. I felt so powerless back then, when he shivered in my arms for a few minutes before calming himself.

Nobody except myself could understand the pain he has been through. I remember sadness in his voice when he described the guilt he felt as he failed to save the previous victims. It stung my heart.

I, Eileen Galvin, was a burden to him, but he still went on, carrying me with him.

When I hear Townshend, I can only hear cries of pain and despair.
I hear Walter Sullivan's threatening steps crawling closer.
I hear my sobbing and Henry's breath getting shorter.
But the world will never understand from that far away.

End
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